FIRST COMICS
MAR. $1.00
NO. 1
$1.25 CANADA
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WARP
PREMIERE ISSUE!
THE QUEST BEGINS!
THE COMING OF LORD CUMULUS!
BRUNNER

FIRST™ NOTES

Organizing a new comic book publishing company is no easy task – particularly one as ambitious as **First Comics.** You are reading these words in the middle of November, 1982 – for all practical purposes, Day 1 of First Comics. But we've been gearing up for this day since late April, 1981 – some 19 months ago!

Warp, our premiere release, is self-explanatory. But I should take a moment or two to tell you a bit about who we are, and how we got here.

First Comics initially came to life as little more than a shack along side the railroad tracks, somewhere near the Yukon. We really weren't in the business of producing comic books back then; the dead seal business was far too lucrative. But then a bunch of environmentalists armed to the hilt with red spray paint came along, and we quickly decided to get involved in another line of work. Since our name already had the word "comics" in it, we thought it might be fun to get into the publishing field.

For those of you who steadfastly avoid comics fanzine news columns, our founding crew has come from a varied background.

Rick Obadiah, our publisher, comes from the twin worlds of advertising and theater (both worlds revolve around a somewhat burnt-out dwarf star megalight years away). His credits include naming Meow Mix ("the only food your cat asks for by name") and producing the play Warp. He's a real nice guy who loves to hog the microphone at comic book conventions.

Richard Felber, our business manager, is the straight one in the crowd; running sheet metal printing plants and historically important condominium high-rises. Because of the peculiar nature of his printing experience, **Warp** #1 almost got printed on titanium steel (take that, Marvel Fanfare!) but the cost of mailing out subscription copies killed the plan.

Mike Gold, our editor, is best known in the comics world for his work as DC Comics' public relations director and as co-founder of and program consultant to the Chicago Comicon comic art convention. After 15 years as a disc jockey, reporter, editor, broadcast producer and free-lance media maven, Gold has finally landed a job he can hold onto. However, he still hates writing about himself in the third person.

Together, these three guys organized First Comics, and proceeded to hire a staff of experts.

Joe Staton, our art director, is a legend in the field, having co-created and drawn E-Man and having drawn a number of little-known books for DC and Marvel: The Hulk, The Avengers, Superman, Batman, Green Lantern... **Rick Oliver** (no, you don't have to be named Rick to get a job at First Comics, but it helps) has a strong background in demographic research and planning and, oddly enough, magazine editing, making him the token straight one in the editorial department; he's our associate editor, which means he is the only one who knows where everything is, where everything should be, and/or where everything would have been if we did it right the first time.

Bruce Patterson recently joined our staff as production coordinator; Bruce is an accomplished letterer, colorist and inker (Legion of Super-Heroes and Camelot 3000 are among his most current accomplishments). And finally, **Kathy Kotsivas** is our office manager, which means we can put the whole company in her name if we ever get in trouble.

I said our line of comics is ambitious; let me explain. By and large, we are in the business of producing monthly comics (we will have a **Warp** book out each month, but during the course of the first year we will be publishing two or three Warp specials in the midst of the play adaptation). The book you hold in your hands is our premiere release; next month, we add **E-Man** to our schedule.

E-Man, of course, is the rather strange superhero published by Charlton in the mid-1970's; the book achieved a cult following and put Joe Staton on the map. Writing our all-new monthly will be Martin Pasko, best known for his work at DC on such titles as Superman, Swamp Thing, and Dr. Fate. Marty and Joe worked together on various projects that have an absurdist quality similar to that of **E-Man:** Plastic Man and Metal Men.

In February, we add our third monthly title to our schedule: **Jon Sable Freelance** – an urban mercenary saga written and drawn by **Mike Grell.** We will be picking up another Mike Grell creation later on this coming spring: **Starslayer #7,** and all future issues, will be published by First Comcis.

We have three more titles on the drawing boards (so to speak) even as I type these words, but if I reveal the details to you right now, I'll be stuck for a couple of columns in months to come.

We are very proud of First Comics, and we are damn lucky to have lined up the very best group of writers and artists **ever** to launch a comics company. Yes, I mean that – look at our creators and opening talent: Frank Brunner, Bob Smith, Peter Gillis, Steve Ditko, Jack C. Harris, Joe Staton, Marty Pasko, Mike Grell... and a surprise or two (check out the last page of **E-Man #1,** for example).

We are going to have fun with First Comics – hell, we've been having fun for a year and a half! And now you're cut in on the action. Our comic books speak for themselves: you will be seeing some things you don't see from other publishers – some truly exciting stories, some spectacular artwork, and, yes, some talented newcomers; we are particularly excited about the writer and penciller in the second story of this book, and we are confident both will become major talents before you know it.

Let me tell you something else about First Comics: we are not going to lose our perspective. Comic books are fun. They can be educational and culturally and morally edifying, and our books will fulfill those responsibilities. But we are in the business of providing unique entertainment – and off-the-wall entertainment.

Together, we are going to have a blast. Welcome aboard. Welcome to First Comics.

– Mike Gold,
Editor

Rick Obadiah, Publisher

Mike Gold, Managing Editor
Joe Staton, Art Director
Rick Oliver, Associate Editor
Bruce Patterson,
Production Coordinator

Richard Felber,
Business Manager
Kathy Kotsivas, Office Manager

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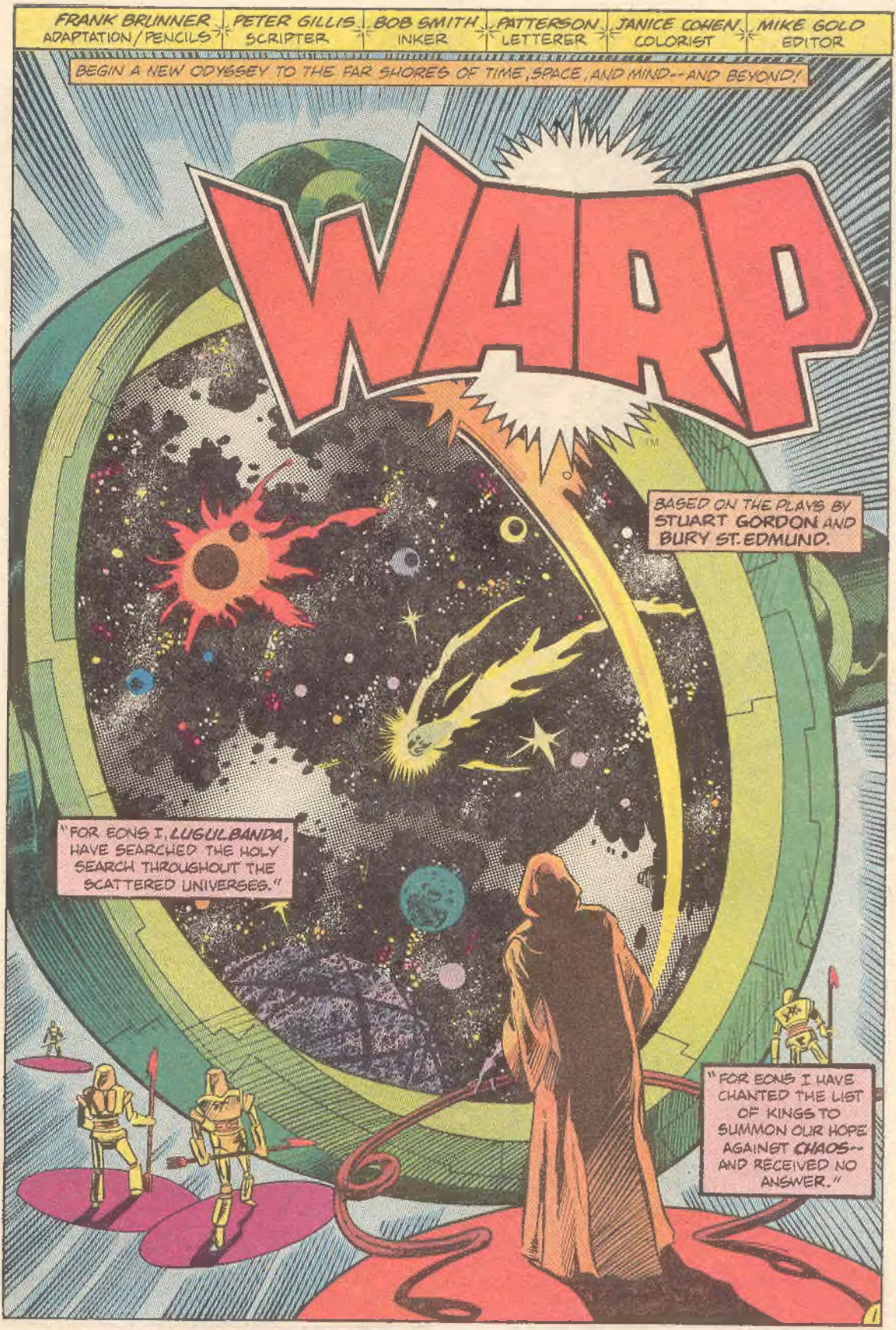
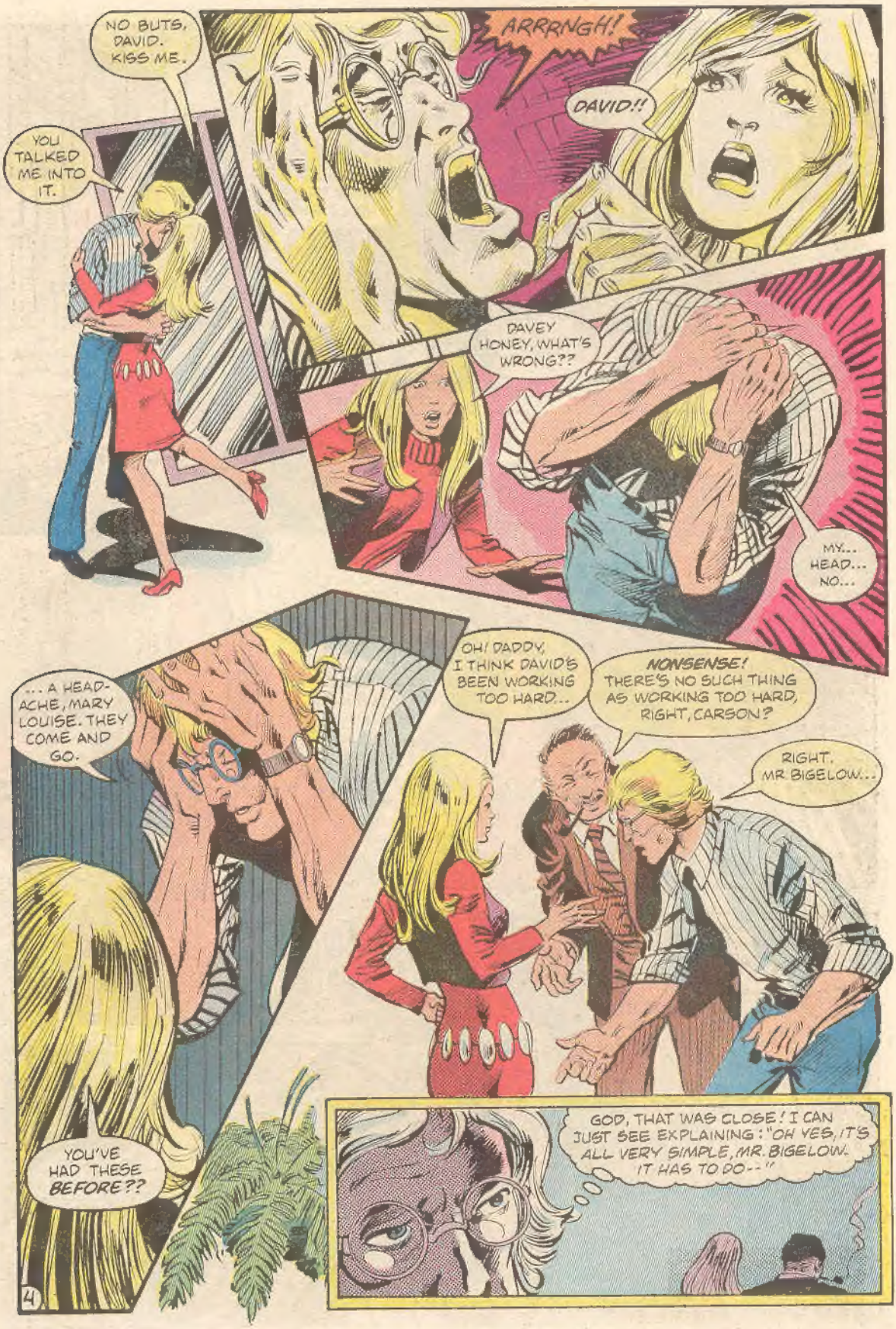

FRANK BRUNNER
ADAPTATION / PENCILS
PETER GILLIS
SCRIPTER
BOB SMITH
INKER
PATTERSON
LETTERER
JANICE COHEN
COLORIST
MIKE GOLD
EDITOR
BEGIN A NEW ODYSSEY TO THE FAR SHORES OF TIME, SPACE, AND MIND--AND BEYOND!
WARP
BASED ON THE PLAYS BY STUART GORDON AND BURY ST. EDMUND.
"FOR EONS I, LUGULBANDA, HAVE SEARCHED THE HOLY SEARCH THROUGHOUT THE SCATTERED UNIVERSES."
"FOR EONS I HAVE CHANTED THE LIST OF KINGS TO SUMMON OUR HOPE AGAINST CHAOS--AND RECEIVED NO ANSWER."

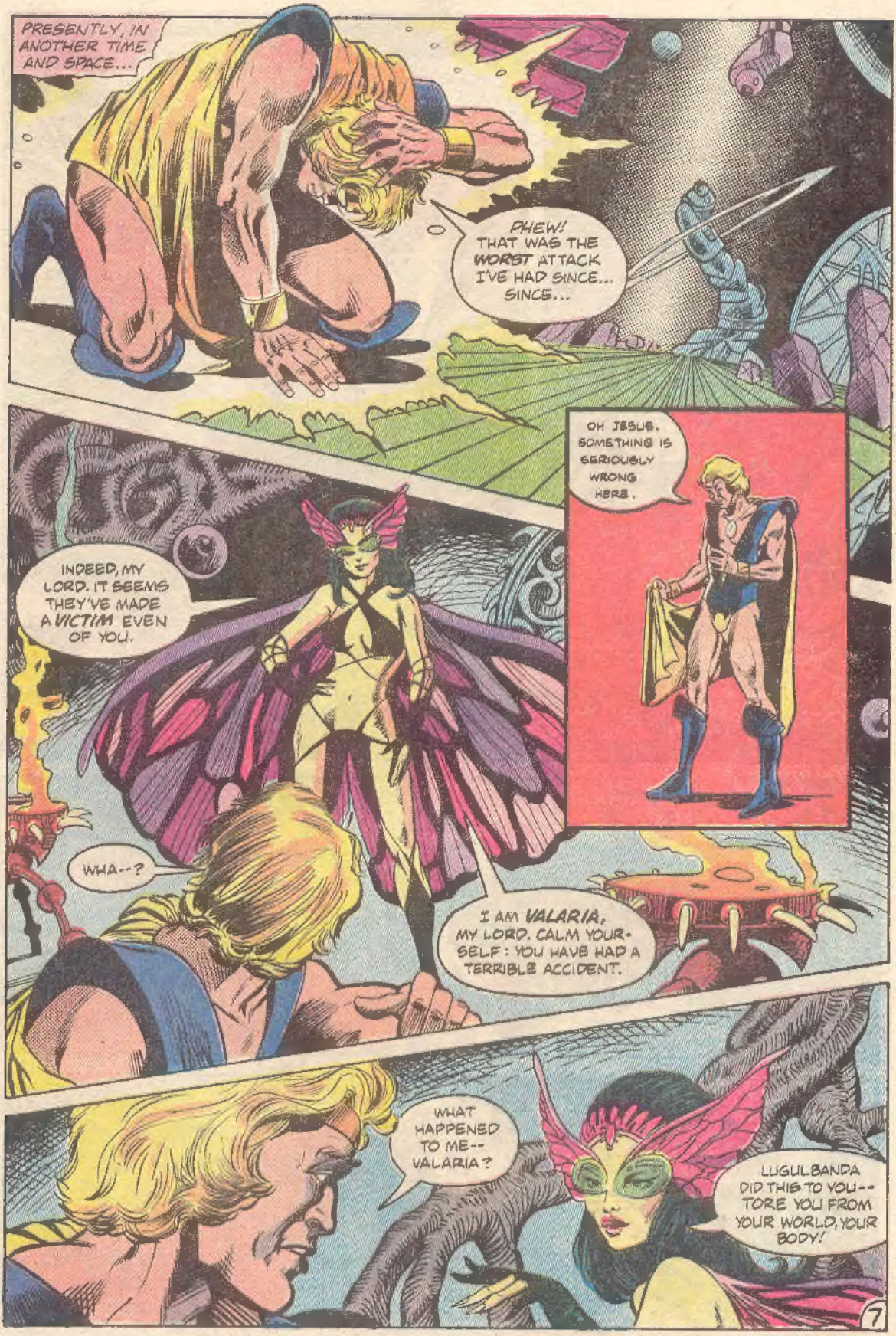
"EVEN I, WHO AM KNOWLEDGE INCARNATE, WONDERED IF THE WORD WOULD FIND THE MAN-- OUR DELIVERER."
"BUT NOW-- FROM BEYOND UNTHINKABLE GULFS, IN SPITE OF THE DREAD VEILS OF PRINCE CHAOS-- THE ANSWER HAS COME!"
"AND NOW THE DESPAIR OF AGES IS LIFTED FROM ME!"
"ON DISTANT EARTH HE STIRS, THE WARRIOR, THE CHAMPION, OUR LAST, BEST HOPE!"

HERE'S YOUR DEPOSIT SLIP, MRS. O'GRADY--
CENTRAL CITY BANK
--AND THANKS FOR SAVING AT CENTRAL CITY BANK.
WHY THANK YOU, DAVID.
OH, MIS-TER CAR-SON--!
VISA
D. CARSON
MARY LOUISE! THIS IS-- ARE YOU HERE TO SEE MR. BIGELOW?
I HAVE A LUNCH DATE WITH "MR. BIGELOW"--
--ONLY I CALL HIM DADDY. DAVID, WHY DO YOU ACT SO MUCH LIKE A TOADY AROUND HIM?
I JUST WANT TO BE A TEAM PLAYER, MARY LOUISE.
AND I JUST WANT TO BE MRS. DAVID CARSON! HANG THE BANK, DAVID--I LOVE YOU!
AND I LOVE YOU, MARY LOUISE. BUT--
3

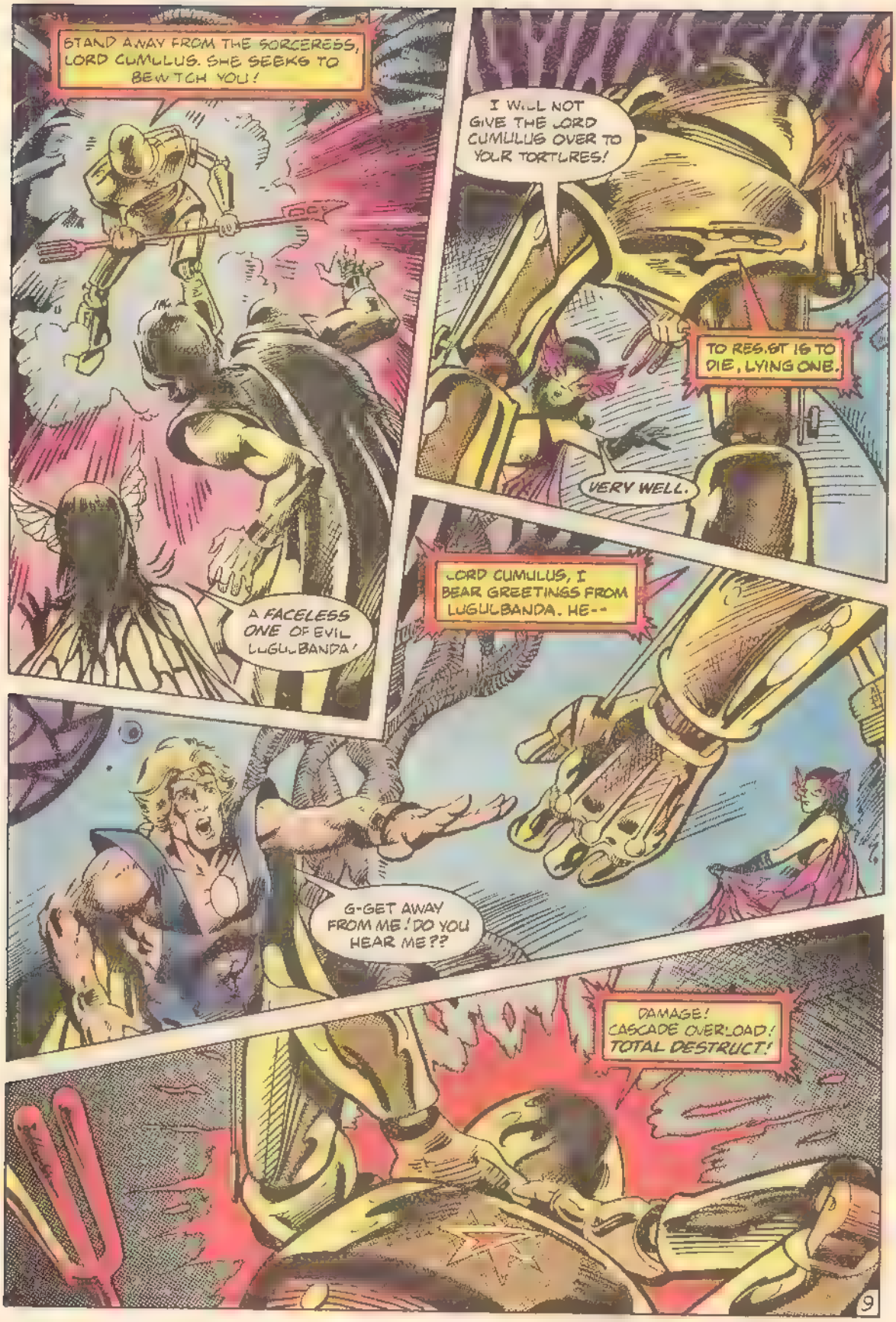

NO BUTS, DAVID. KISS ME.
YOU TALKED ME INTO IT.
ARRRNGH!
DAVID!!
DAVEY HONEY, WHAT'S WRONG??
MY... HEAD... NO...
OH! DADDY, I THINK DAVID'S BEEN WORKING TOO HARD...
NONSENSE! THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS WORKING TOO HARD, RIGHT, CARSON?
RIGHT, MR. BIGELOW...
... A HEADACHE, MARY LOUISE. THEY COME AND GO.
YOU'VE HAD THESE BEFORE??
GOD, THAT WAS CLOSE! I CAN JUST SEE EXPLAINING: "OH YES, IT'S ALL VERY SIMPLE, MR. BIGELOW. IT HAS TO DO--"
4

--WITH THE YEARS I SPENT IN THE INSANE ASYLUM...!
SANITARIUM
"THE YEARS I SPENT DROWNING-- WHEN THINGS TORE AT MY MIND, AND EVERY TEAR WAS FEAR--!"
"AND ESPECIALLY THAT ONE NIGHT-- GOOD GOD, THAT NIGHT--!"
"WHEN THE HOSTS OF HELL SPLIT MY HEAD WIDE OPEN--"
I HAVE WON, LORD CUMULUS! I HAVE WON AND I AM FREE!
"--AND ALL MY NIGHTMARES EXPLODED AROUND ME!"
5

"THE HILARIOUS PART IS THAT IT CURED ME!"
IT MAY HAVE BEEN A KIND OF SELF-INDUCED SHOCK THERAPY-- BUT THE FACT IS, IT'S OVER!
I HOPE SO, DR. VIVIAN! I HOPE SO!
BUT STILL THERE ARE THESE ATTACKS OF THE PAIN, THE FEAR--AND VOICES! I'VE COME SO FAR-- I CAN'T FALL BACK INTO--INTO--
ARISE, LORD CUMULUS!
NO! NOT AGAIN! NOT ALREADY!
FEN-RA AWAITS YOU!
YOU MUST PROTECT THE CRYSTAL!
NO!
GET OUT OF MY HEAD!
YEEEEAAAAAAHHH!!!!
WHAT IS THIS TREACHERY? HE IS TAKEN FROM US!

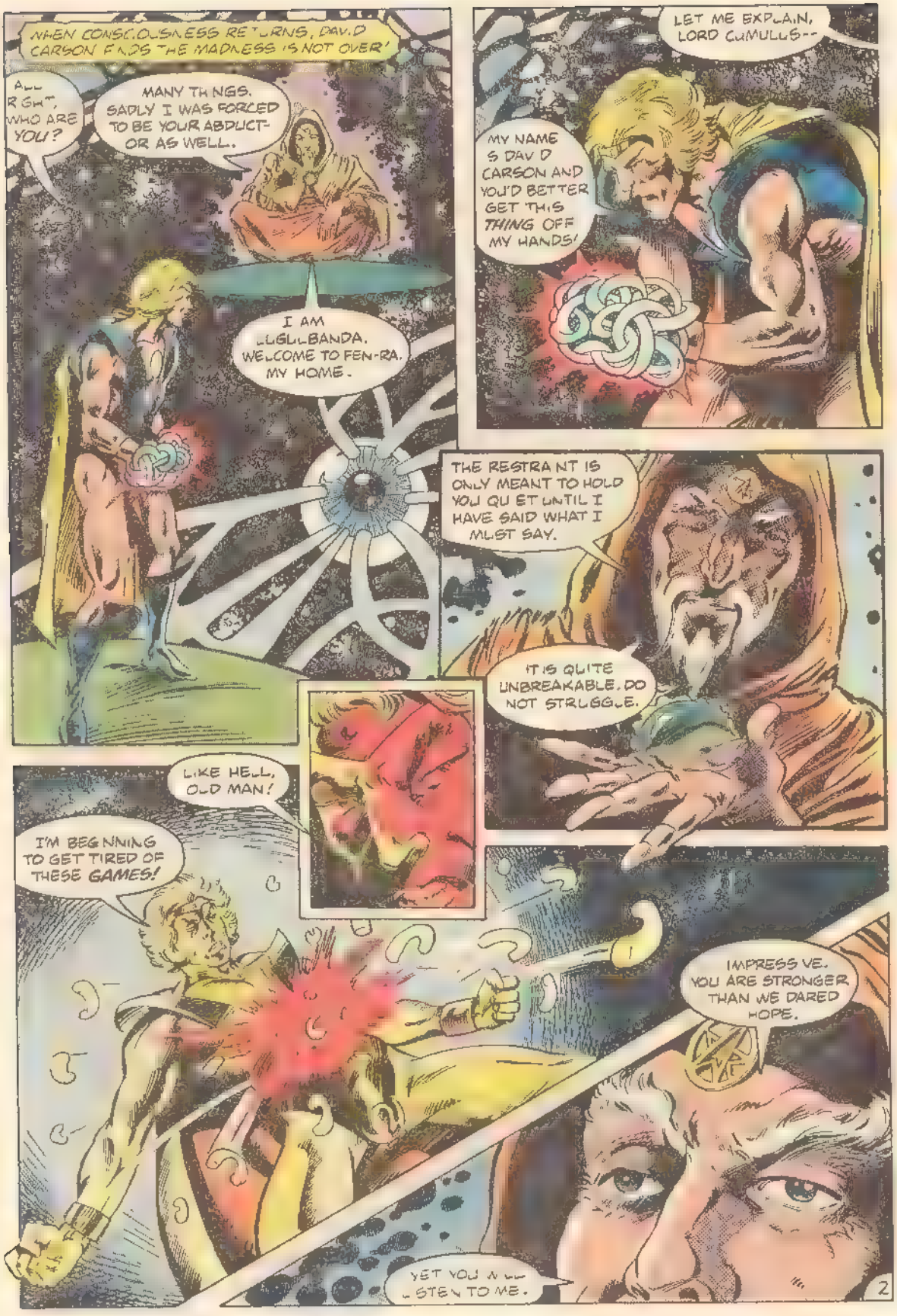

PRESENTLY, IN ANOTHER TIME AND SPACE...
PHEW! THAT WAS THE WORST ATTACK I'VE HAD SINCE... SINCE...
OH JESUS. SOMETHING IS SERIOUSLY WRONG HERE.
INDEED, MY LORD. IT SEEMS THEY'VE MADE A VICTIM EVEN OF YOU.
WHA--?
I AM VALARIA, MY LORD. CALM YOURSELF: YOU HAVE HAD A TERRIBLE ACCIDENT.
WHAT HAPPENED TO ME-- VALARIA?
LUGULBANDA DID THIS TO YOU-- TORE YOU FROM YOUR WORLD, YOUR BODY!

LUGULBANDA? WHO'S HE?
AN ANCIENT, EVIL, VICIOUS MAN--AND VERY POWERFUL. I FEAR HE MAY ATTACK YOU EVEN HERE IN MY CASTLE.
CASTLE?
BUT I FORGET--YOU MUST BE BONE-WEARY MY LORD. YOU MUST REST.
SOME WINE WILL RESTORE YOUR STRENGTH.
SYMAX!
IT'S OPAL WINE FROM THE SIXTH GARDEN MOON. HAVE SOME.
VALARIA, WHO IS--THIS?
OH, THAT'S JUST SYMAX. TAKE THE GOBLET, MY LORD.
WHY DO YOU KEEP CALLING ME "MY LORD"? MY NAME IS DAVID CARSON.
OF COURSE--DAVID. HOW CAN I SERVE YOU?
WELL, FIRST OFF: WHERE AM I?
MY HOME, DAVID. A FINE AND PRIVATE PLACE IN THE SHADOWS OF THE FIFTH PLANE--OR DIMENSION, IF YOU PREFER.
I KNEW IT! I'VE GONE OVER THE EDGE.
LET ME EXPLAIN--DAVID--


STAND AWAY FROM THE SORCERESS, LORD CUMULUS. SHE SEEKS TO BEWITCH YOU!
A FACELESS ONE OF EVIL LUGULBANDA!
I WILL NOT GIVE THE LORD CUMULUS OVER TO YOUR TORTURES!
TO RESIST IS TO DIE, LYING ONE.
VERY WELL.
LORD CUMULUS, I BEAR GREETINGS FROM LUGULBANDA. HE--
G-GET AWAY FROM ME! DO YOU HEAR ME??
DAMAGE! CASCADE OVERLOAD! TOTAL DESTRUCT!

KABOOM!
THIS IS NUTS!
WHAT'S WRONG, DAVID? YOU SOUND UPSET.
I JUST POINTED AT H.M.--AND HE BLEW UP. WHAT IS THIS?
I'LL EXPLAIN IT ALL. JUST RELAX.
JUST RELAX--LET YOUR MIND GO BLANK--IT'S BETTER IF YOU'RE RECEPTIVE--
YESS--
RECEPTIVE TO WHAT I'M ABOUT TO GIVE YOU--!
WHAT THE HELL?!
OH NO YOU DON'T, YOU LITTLE BITCH!
SO IT'S BITCH, SIT?

LET ME SHOW YOU WHAT THE BITCH IS CAPABLE OF!
DESTROY CUMULUS, MY CHILDREN!
ZZZZZZZZZZ
LET THE DEATHSWARM COME!
BUT BEFORE A MOVE CAN BE MADE--
--TWO FACELESS ONES MATERIALIZE BETWEEN CUMULUS AND THE SWARM--
--AND EFFICIENTLY VAPORIZE THE INSECTS!
FORGIVE MY INSISTENCE MY LORD
MY LORD PLEASE LOVE IN TIME
ARE YOU CRAZY? NO!


WHEN CONSCIOUSNESS RETURNS, DAVID CARSON FINDS THE MADNESS IS NOT OVER!
ALL RIGHT, WHO ARE YOU?
MANY THINGS. SADLY I WAS FORCED TO BE YOUR ABDUCTOR AS WELL.
I AM LLGLLBANDA. WELCOME TO FEN-RA, MY HOME.
LET ME EXPLAIN, LORD CUMULUS--
MY NAME IS DAVID CARSON AND YOU'D BETTER GET THIS THING OFF MY HANDS!
THE RESTRAINT IS ONLY MEANT TO HOLD YOU QUIET UNTIL I HAVE SAID WHAT I MUST SAY.
IT IS QUITE UNBREAKABLE. DO NOT STRUGGLE.
LIKE HELL, OLD MAN!
I'M BEGINNING TO GET TIRED OF THESE GAMES!
IMPRESSIVE. YOU ARE STRONGER THAN WE DARED HOPE.
YET YOU WILL LISTEN TO ME.
2

WHERE AM I AND HOW DID I GET HERE AND WHEN'S THE NEXT BUS HOME? WHY DO YOU CALL ME LORD CUMULUS AND HOW DID I END UP IN THE DIGS OF AN INSECT QUEEN WHO TRIED TO KILL ME?
IF YOU SHOUTED LESS YOU WOULD HEAR MORE, MY LORD.
I HAD MEANT TO TELL YOU THE WHOLE STORY ON YOUR ARRIVAL. WHEN YOU ENDED UP IN VALARIA'S CLUTCHES I SENT MY SERVANT TO ENLIGHTEN YOU. BUT INSTEAD OF LISTENING YOU DESTROYED HIM.
I GUESS I'VE BEEN A BIT OF A JERK, HAVEN'T I?
NO, MERELY ONE CAUGHT IN THE PRESS OF EVENTS.
BUT TO BEGIN: YOUR REAL NAME, DANNY--
DAVID
DAVID IS LORD CUMULUS AND YOU ARE THE ORPHANED CHILD OF-- AN OLD FRIEND. THE EARTH WAS YOUR INCUBATOR BUT FEN-RA WHICH YOU SEE BEFORE YOU IS YOUR HOME. AND YOU HAVE MUCH TO DO TO DEFEND THAT HOME.
OH YEAH? THE ONLY THING I 'HAVE TO DO' IN FEN-RA IS LEAVE IT FOR EARTH!
13

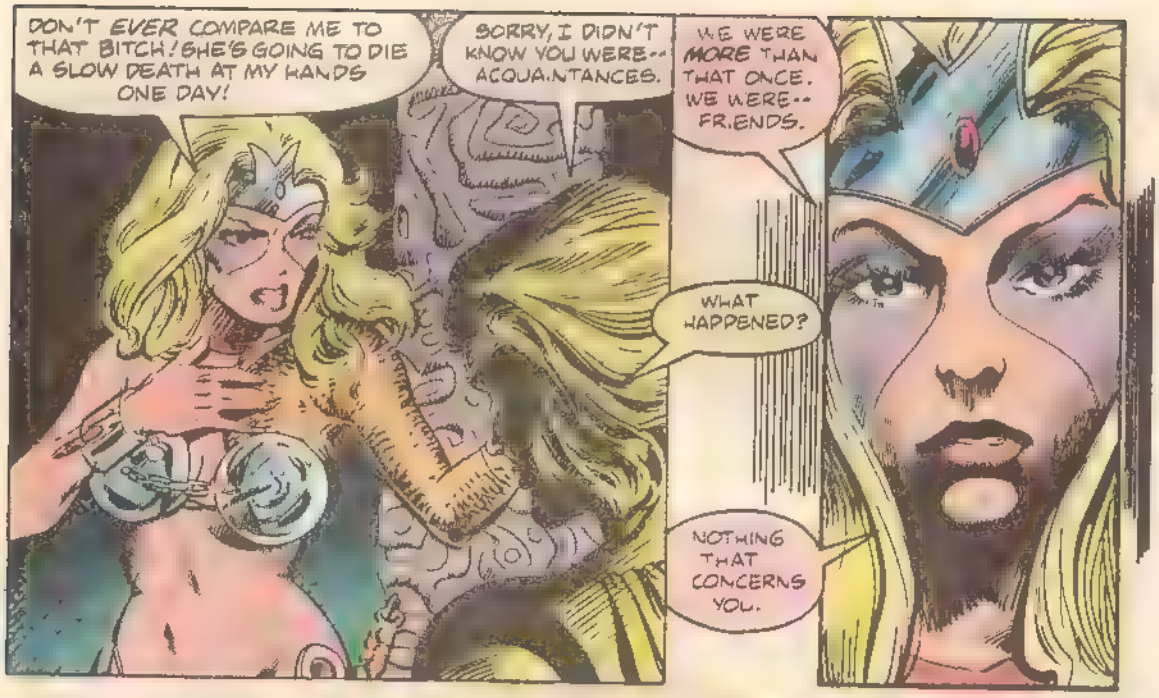
YOU ARE THE ONLY BEING POWERFUL ENOUGH TO STAND AGAINST PRINCE CHAOS, WHO HOLDS US IN A GRIP OF SIEGE!
PERHAPS I HAVEN'T MADE IT CLEAR THAT I DON'T WANT TO BE LORD CUMULUS! THE ONLY ROLE THAT SUITS ME IS DAVID CARSON BACK ON EARTH!
IF LORD CUMULUS DOES NOT OPPOSE CHAOS, ALL THAT LIVES SHALL END-- AND THAT INCLUDES EARTH, CENTRAL CITY, DAVID CARSON, AND MARY LOUISE BIGELOW.
A GOOD POINT--IF IT'S THE TRUTH. BUT SUPPOSE I STILL REFUSE?
THEN YOU ARE FREE TO RETURN TO EARTH--IF YOU CAN FIND THE WAY.
AND IF I ACCEPT?
THERE IS SOMEONE I WANT YOU TO MEET. COME.
THIS IS SARGON, MY LORD. SHE WILL TEACH YOU WHAT YOU WILL NEED TO KNOW.
MY LORD CUMULUS

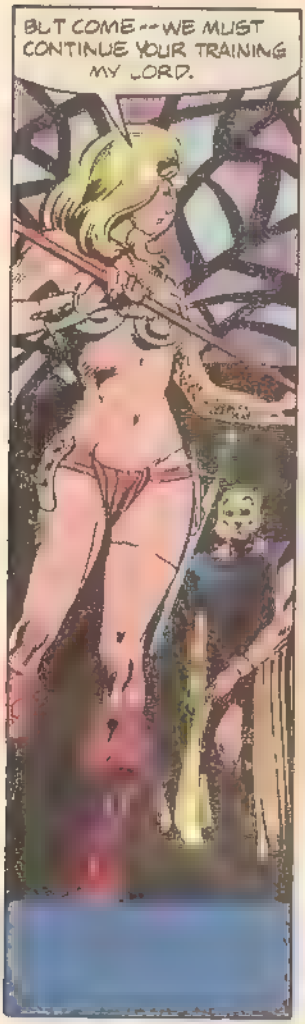
THAT'S A PRETTY NAME, SARGON. S IT YOUR FIRST OR LAST?
ITS ENERGY BOLT IS TRIGGERED BY HAND PRESSURE. IF YOU GET HIT BY ONE OF THESE, IT WON'T BE FATAL, BUT YOU MUST MAKE NO MOVEMENT AFTERWARDS FOR AS LONG AS POSS,BLE. UNDERSTAND.?
IT'S NAME ENOUGH FOR A WARRIOR. NOW TAKE THIS ENERGY SPEAR AND FAMILIAR,ZE YOURSELF WITH IT.
UNDERSTAND?
YES, MA'AM, NO MOVEMENT.
SO, WHEN DO I GET TO PRACT,CE WITH ONE?
TH S LESSON IS MERELY TO ENABLE YOU TO IDENTIFY AND NEUTRALIZE COMMON HANDWEAPONS. YOU SHOULD NEED NONE YOURSELF.
WE ARE PREPARING YOU FOR REAL BATTLE, MY LORD. AND YOU HAVE ALREADY USED ITS WEAPON ONCE.
15

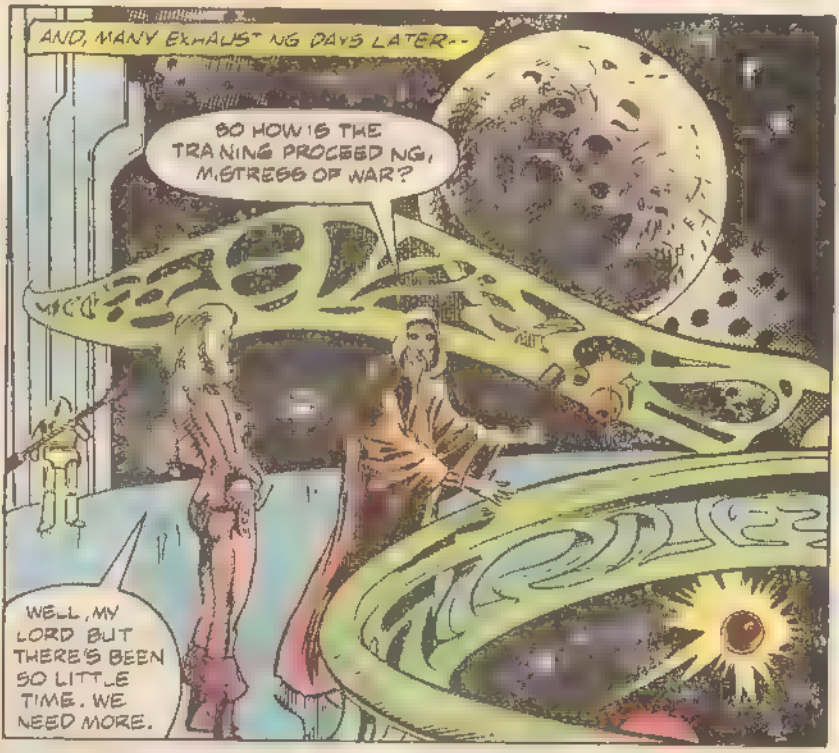
YOU MEAN WHEN I REACHED FOR THE FACELESS ONE'S THROAT AND HE COLLAPSED.
EXACTLY. MY POWERS ARE LIM TED TO A FEW FEET, BUT THEY'LL SUFFICE TO SHOW HOW THEY'RE USED.
ZAP!
SARGON, IF YOU WEREN'T A WOMAN, I'D--
DEFEND YOUR-SELF, MY LORD!
YOU ARE HERE TO LEARN SKILL, NOT PERPETUATE FOOLISHNESS!
THUMP!
FIND THE LINK BETWEEN MIND AND BODY BEFORE YOU ARE INJURED!
HARDER! HARDER! THINK HARDER MY LORD!
SHE'S RIGHT! GOT TO CONCENTRATE--!
LIKE THIS SARGON?
KAM!
16

VERY GOOD! YOU LEARN QUICKLY FOR A MAN. NEXT YOU MUST DO IT BLINDFOLDED!
C'MON, SARGON--DON'T YOU EVER BREAK STRIDE?
IT'S JUST A JOB I'VE BEEN DOING FOR 35,000 YEARS. IT GETS EASIER.
NOW SEEK OUT AND DESTROY THE FACELESS ONE IN THIS ROOM!
BLAST! MAYBE MY HEAD NEEDS A CLEANING.
BY THE WAY, YOU DON'T EXPECT ME TO BELIEVE YOU'RE 35,000 YEARS OLD?
I ONLY EXPECT YOU TO OBEY AND LEARN. TRY AGAIN!
DESTROY THE TARGET!

ZAP
AARRRGH! WHAT'S HAPPENING?!?
I COULD FEEL ITS MOLECULES DISINTEGRATING. IT WAS--TERRIFYING.
ENERGY FEEDBACK. YOU MUST LEARN TO BLOCK AGAINST IT. REST NOW, AND WE'LL TRY AGAIN.
OH, I'M NOT TIRED SARGON!
EXCELLENT, MY LORD! BUT NOW YOU MUST REST. SOME WINE WILL RESTORE YOUR STRENGTH
FUNNY-- THAT'S JUST WHAT VALARIA SAID TO ME.
18


DON'T EVER COMPARE ME TO THAT BITCH! SHE'S GOING TO DIE A SLOW DEATH AT MY HANDS ONE DAY!
SORRY, I DIDN'T KNOW YOU WERE-- ACQUAINTANCES.
WE WERE MORE THAN THAT ONCE. WE WERE-- FRIENDS.
WHAT HAPPENED?
NOTHING THAT CONCERNS YOU.


BUT COME-- WE MUST CONTINUE YOUR TRAINING MY LORD.


AND, MANY EXHAUSTING DAYS LATER--
SO HOW IS THE TRAINING PROCEEDING, MISTRESS OF WAR?
WELL, MY LORD BUT THERE'S BEEN SO LITTLE TIME. WE NEED MORE.

A FINAL TEST, AND NO MORE. I'M AFRAID TIME IS NOT OURS TO BESTOW, CHILD!
SHADOWS GATHER. GREAT ENERGY BUILDS IN THE DARK REGIONS!

"IT IS PRINCE CHAOS--AND HE PREPARES FOR WAR!"
"IF HE STRIKES TOO SOON--FEN-RA WILL FALL, THE DARKLING PRINCE WILL GAIN POSSESSION OF THE CRYSTAL; AND THEN--"
"--WE SHALL WITNESS THE END OF ALL THAT IS!"
LET THE COSMOS TREMBLE! NEXT ISSUE: THE BATTLE BEGINS!

warped words

Welcome to the world of **Warp**

In lieu of a letters column – we probably won't be able to run any letters until our fourth issue – it might be a good idea to give you an idea of what has gone on before. Whereas this is the first issue of **Warp**, if this is your first Warp experience, well, there is a legacy.

Warp got its start back in 1971 on the stage of the Organic Theater Company, a highly innovative – and highly successful – group of talented actors and writers, under the direction of Stuart Gordon, the company's founder and energy-source.

Gordon had an appreciation for the comic books of the time and thought it might be fun to bring some of that excitement to the stage. Together with co-writer Bury St. Edmund, they drafted the tale of David Carson, a mild-mannered bank clerk who finds himself the host-body to the savior of the universe.

Conceived as a three-part production, Warp I ("My Battlefield, My Body") opened in the midst of Chicago's experimental theater district just after another innovative original production, Grease, left home for Broadway. Mind you, the Organic has a reputation for the unusual – they got their start doing a literal adaptation of Peter Pan, sans a bit of clothing, and had just wound up an unusual look at Edgar Allen Poe's private obsessions, madnesses, and death. Even so, theater audiences were not quite prepared for Warp.

To say the costumes were unlike anything ever on stage is a bit like saying McDonald's sells a couple of hamburgers. Strange lighting effects, sweaty actors producing mammoth fight scenes right there on stage. . . all the magic of the epic comic books was all there on stage, right before your very eyes!

It took a little while for the comics fans and the science fiction fans to catch on – after all, we were an audience largely ignored in the early 1970's. But what the more traditional theater-goers saw literally blew their minds.

A few months later, Warp II ("Unleashed, Unchained!") opened and played in repertoire with Warp I, and Gordon and St. Edmund upped the ante considerably. Fight scenes became more involved, lighting and sound effects became more awesome, characters became all the more larger than life. By the time Warp III ("To Die. . . Alive") joined the schedule, Warp tickets were just a little bit easier to come by than, oh, Super Bowl tickets the day before the game.

After a full year in Chicago, the Organic held an amazing Warpathon where they performed all three episodes (catered – a course served between each act and between each play). And then they left for New York.

Prior to this point, a rather well-known comic book artist was brought in as art director. He reworked some of the visual look of the production, did the poster and program book art, and contributed to the lighting design and costuming. The guy's name was Neal Adams, and his work earned him a piece of the prestigious Drama Desk Award.

Unfortunately, Warp itself wasn't as lucky. In spite of excellent reviews in such places as Newsweek, The Wall Street Journal and Playboy, and in spite of excellent attendance at the previews, the concept of Warp was just a bit too much for the more staid critics of the daily papers. Mind you, this was five years before Star Wars, and the Broadway critics thought all that science fiction stuff was beneath them. Small men, small minds. Warp closed in three weeks.

It did play Washington, D.C. quite successfully; but legal difficulties prevented the play from being staged again until 1979, when it reopened in Chicago for a sold-out five month run. The revival was so successful, it opened in a much larger theater the next year, and it racked up an impressive eight month stay. Warp also enjoyed a successful run in Minneapolis.

It was during the Chicago revival that Warp met the comics industry, although many 1972-era comics writers and artists saw the play on Broadway, and a number of them went down to Washington to see the final two parts of the play. But in 1980, 40 comics pros attending the Chicago Comicon saw Warp II (many stayed on for another look at Warp I, later that night), including the honchos at Marvel and DC comics. Also in attendance were a number of people who would later be associated with First Comics, Joe Staton, Mike Grell, and, of course, Frank Brunner.

Producer Rick Obadiah and I worked closely together on that show – I helped get the word out to those segments of the community that might not realize there was this weird show in town, and together, Rick and I arranged for the various Warp tie-ins at the Comicon, including the show for the industry's top pros. It was a lot of fun, believe me.

When Marvel and DC each approached Rick about doing a Warp comic book, I advised him on the nature of the comics industry. For a variety of business-type reasons, we thought it might be better for us to do the comic book on our own, and Rick Felber came in as our business manager and helped us expand a comic book into a comic book company.

After talking with Neal Adams, who, as the play's art director, had an obvious personal commitment to Warp but was tied down with other commitments – including his own comic creation, **Ms. Mystic** for Pacific Comics – we approached Frank Brunner to do the adaptation of the plays and to pencil the book.

Our adaptation is faithful to the play but we have changed a few aspects in order to make it more open-ended, and of course, we're developing origins and additional plot lines in our back-ups and our **Warp Specials**.

And here we are.

We'll profile the people behind **Warp** – both the creators and the comics professionals – in our letters column next month, but I would like to say a word or two about the talented newcomers who turned in the Sargon story in this book.

Writer John Ostrander may be new to comics, but he is an accomplished playwright and actor, having co-written Bloody Bess for the Organic Theater (the play toured Europe and played Chicago on an extended run), among other credits. Penciller Lenin Delsol, British-born and a Chicago resident, is quite literally the most talented newcomer either Joe Staton or I have seen in some time – and together, Joe and I must have seen nearly one thousand artists' portfolios! You will be seeing more of John and Lenin's work, including another Sargon series in the pages of **Warp #5** through **#7**.

In addition to the continuing adaptation of the play by Frank Brunner, Peter G. Ilis and Bob Smith, we will be running a special three-part Faceless Ones series in the back of issues #2 through #4. Our talent on this series, writer Jack C. Harris and artist Steve Ditko.

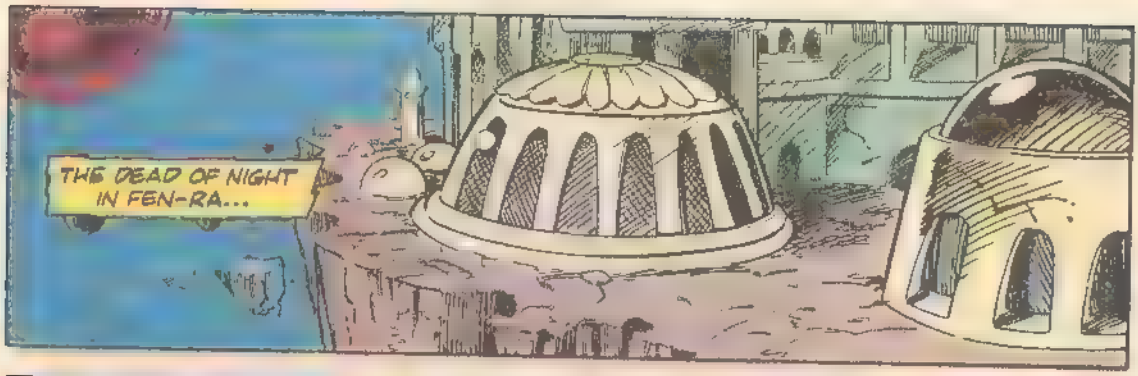
And, just for fun, we've got something special cooking up for March. The Warp adaptation will be taking a one-month vacation – giving Brunner time to relearn his kids' names – and in its place we'll be offering our first **Warp Special**. We don't want to tip our hand, but let me say the book will involve that character we introduce on the last page of this issue's first story.

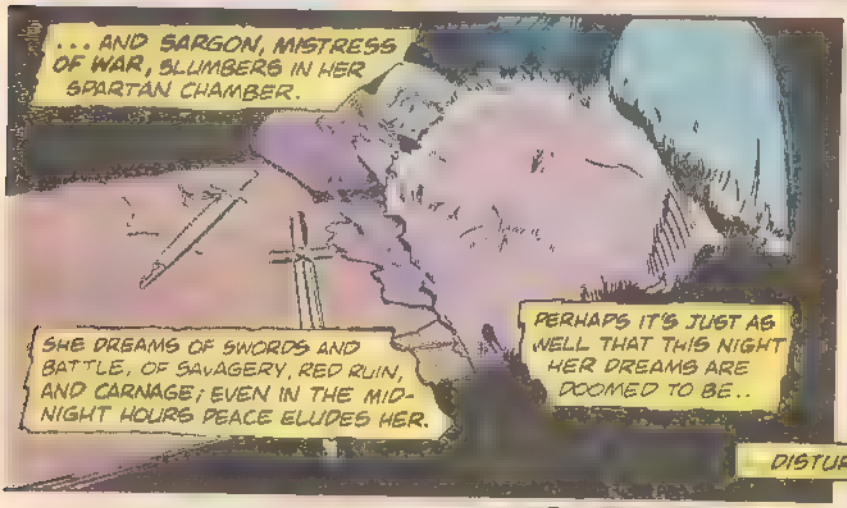
Oh, yes. Letters. After all, this is the letters page. We want 'em. Good, bad or indifferent, we want 'em. And we'll actually read 'em. And we'll print the most interesting of 'em. . . but we can only print yours if you send it to us.

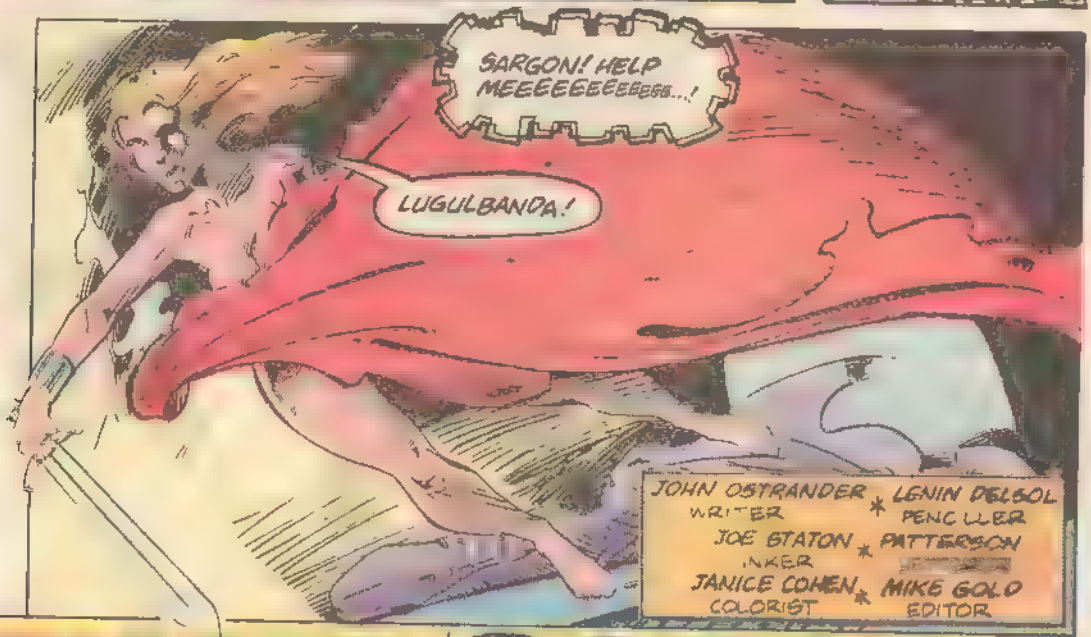
Our address: Warp, c/o First Comics, Inc., 1014 Davis Street, Evanston, Illinois 60201.

Next month. Lord Cumulus meets his brother the Prince of Madness. And if you think your family gatherings get pretty hairy, wait 'till you get a load of this!

Mike Gold
Editor



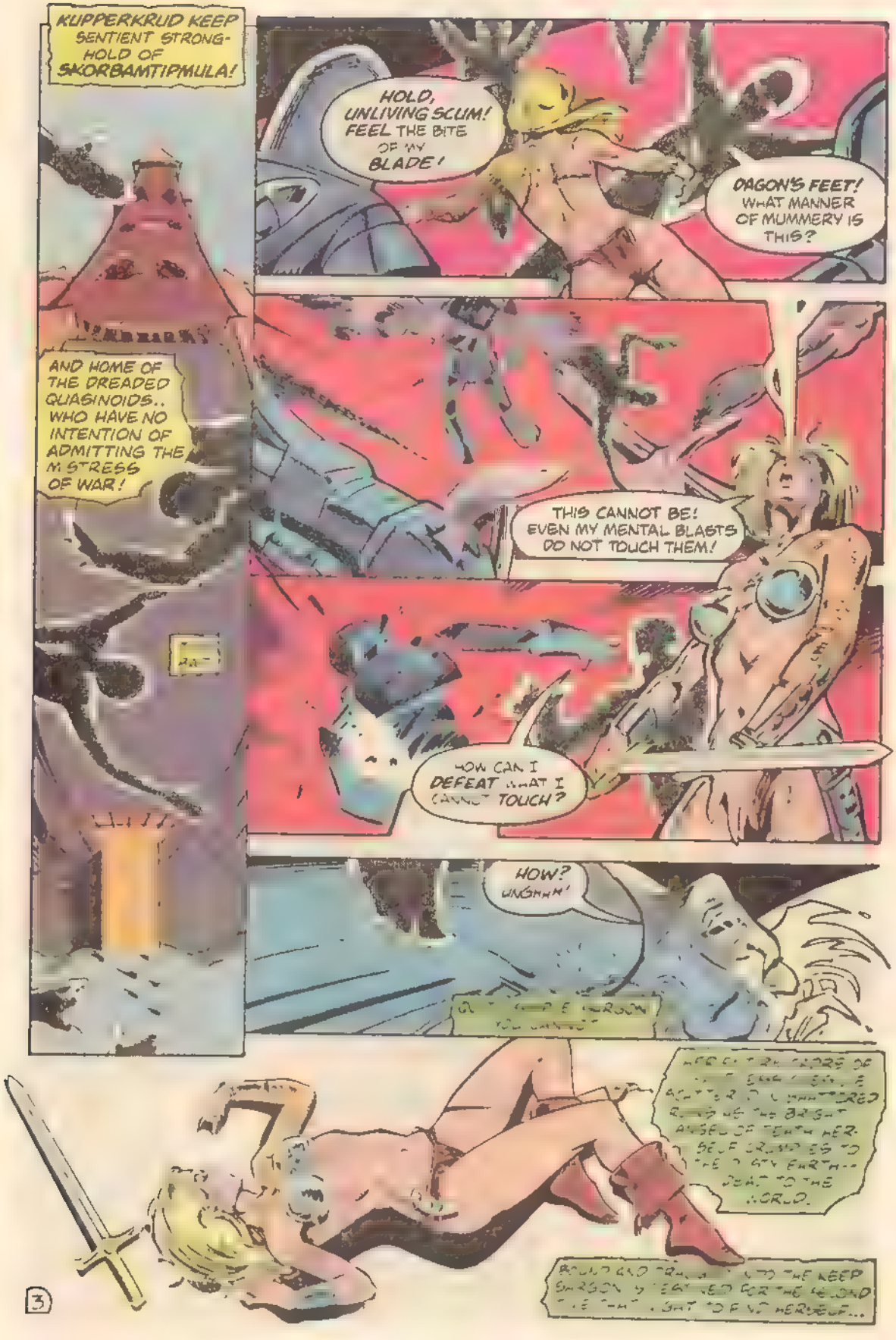


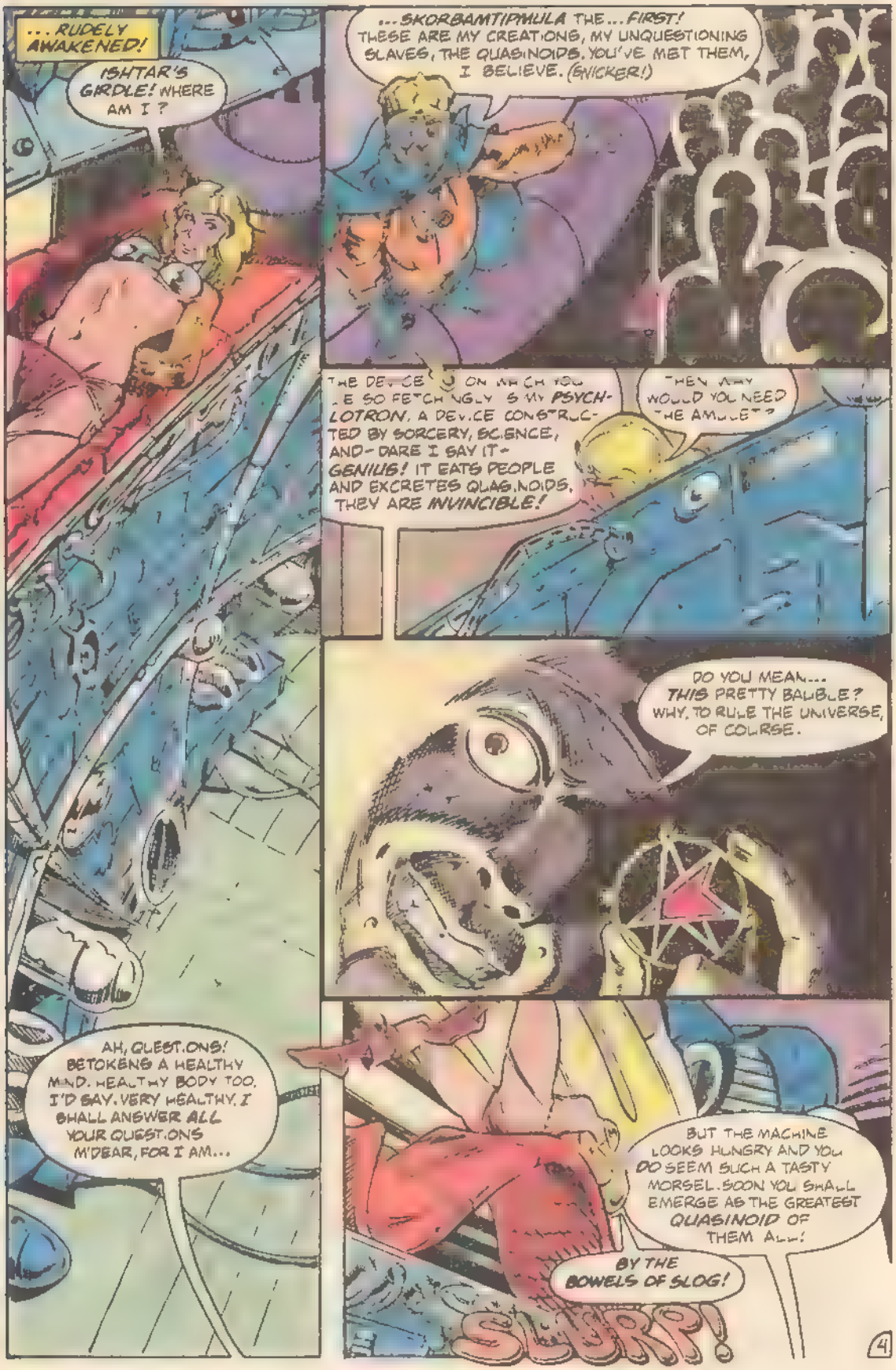


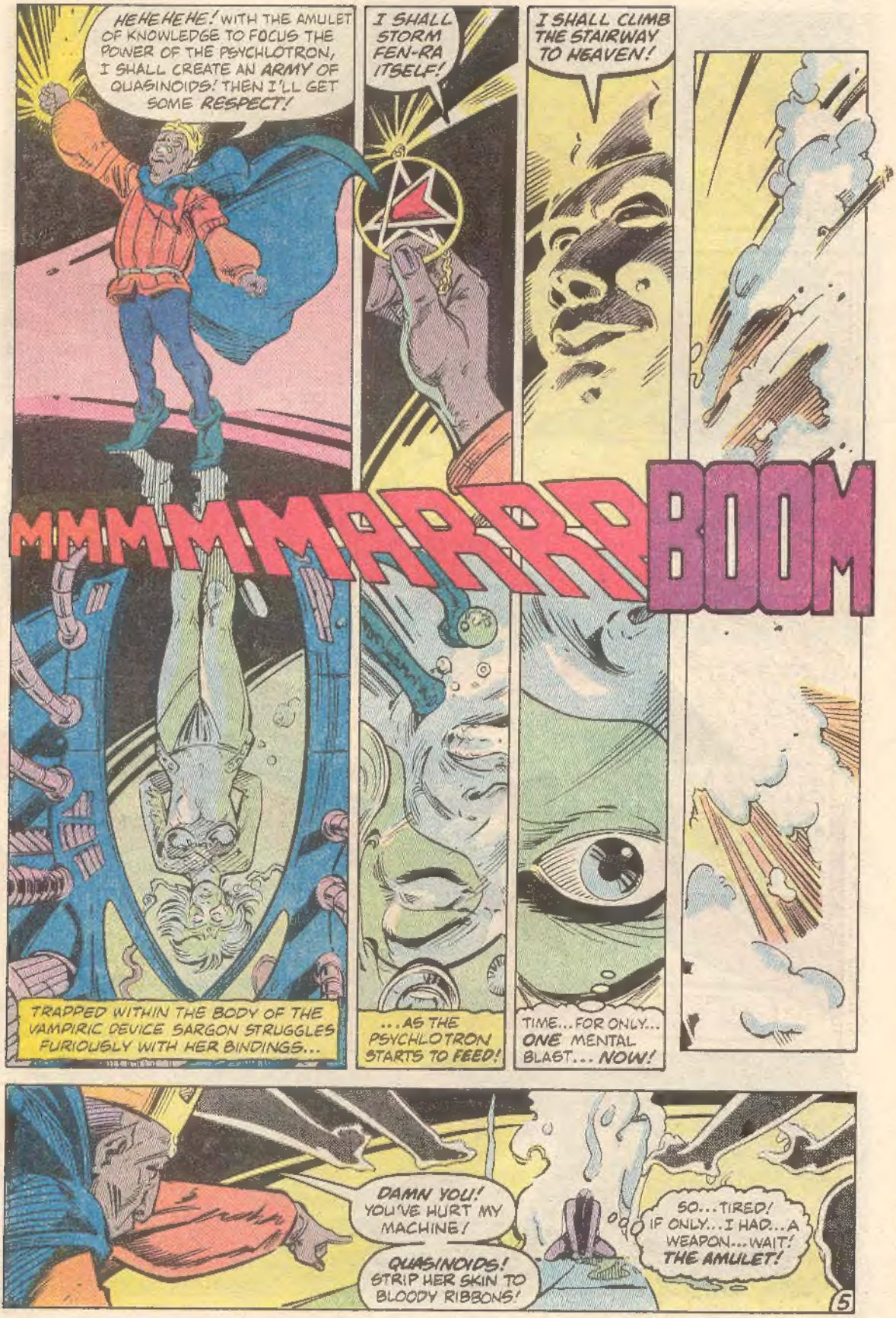
SARGON MISTRESS OF WAR™ * ROUGH AND TUMBLE

BASED UPON CHARACTERS CREATED BY STUART GORDON AND BURY ST EDMUND

DOWN THE NIGHT-SHROUDED CORRIDORS OF FEN-RA SARGON RACES, HEART POUNDING FIERCELY, LA-...
MY LIEGE! WHAT HAS HAPPENED?
...QUASINOIDS!... SENDINGS OF THE DWARF-SORCERER SKORBAMTIPMULA THE SHORT... ATTACKED ME!
THEY STOLE MY AMULET SARGON! MY FAVORITE AMULET!
THEN THEY DIE, M'LORD. WHERE DWELLS THIS SORCERER?
BARELY WITHIN THE DREADED DAGON DIMENSION. DON'T BE TOO HARD ON THE LITTLE GUY, SARGON. JUST TAKE A SQUAD OF FACELESS ONES AND LEAN ON HIM A LITTLE.
NODDING SHARPLY THE INTERSTELLAR SWORDMAIDEN LEADS HER LEGION THROUGH THE DIMENSIONAL WARP.
...ALONG THE SENSES-SHATTERING PATHS OF TIME AND SPACE KNOWN BEST TO HER!
...AND THE WORLD'S MOST DANGEROUS BAND
AH!
NOW, DID I TELL SARGON CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS ARE USELESS AGAINST THE QUASINOIDS?
WELL, SHE'S A BRIGHT GIRL AND WILL PROBABLY FIGURE IT OUT FOR HERSELF
2

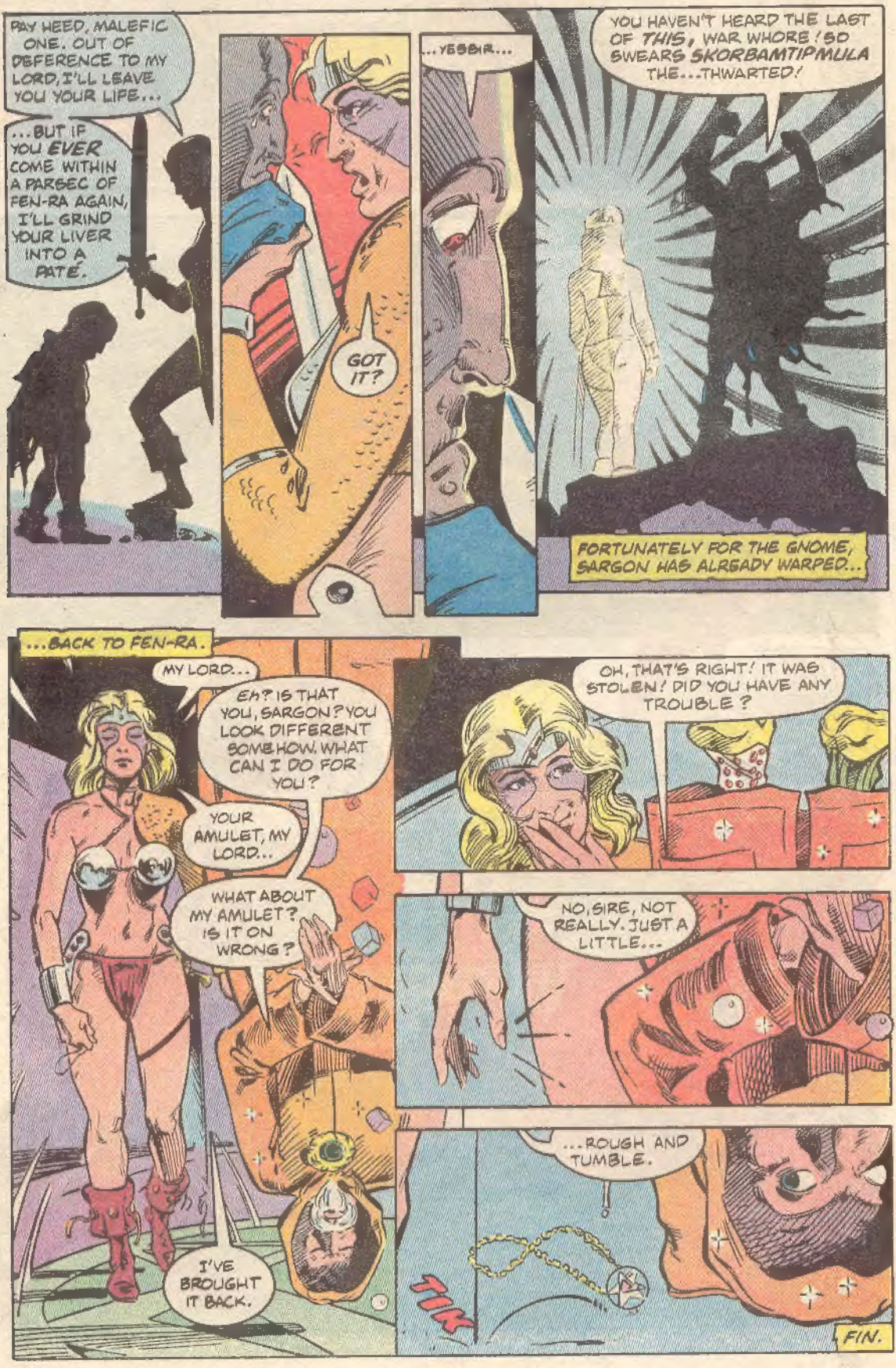

KUPPERKRUD KEEP SENTIENT STRONG-HOLD OF SKORBAMTIPMULA!
AND HOME OF THE DREADED QUASINOIDS.. WHO HAVE NO INTENTION OF ADMITTING THE MISTRESS OF WAR!
HOLD, UNLIVING SCUM! FEEL THE BITE OF MY BLADE!
DAGON'S FEET! WHAT MANNER OF MUMMERY IS THIS?
THIS CANNOT BE! EVEN MY MENTAL BLASTS DO NOT TOUCH THEM!
HOW CAN I DEFEAT WHAT I CANNOT TOUCH?
HOW? UNGHHH!
3


...RUDELY AWAKENED!
ISHTAR'S GIRDLE! WHERE AM I?
...SKORBAMTIPMULA THE...FIRST! THESE ARE MY CREATIONS, MY UNQUESTIONING SLAVES, THE QUASINOIDS. YOU'VE MET THEM, I BELIEVE. (SNICKER!)
THE DEVICE ON WHICH YOU LIE SO FETCHINGLY IS MY PSYCHLOTRON, A DEVICE CONSTRUCTED BY SORCERY, SCIENCE, AND - DARE I SAY IT - GENIUS! IT EATS PEOPLE AND EXCRETES QUASINOIDS. THEY ARE INVINCIBLE!
THEN WHY WOULD YOU NEED THE AMULET?
DO YOU MEAN... THIS PRETTY BAUBLE? WHY, TO RULE THE UNIVERSE, OF COURSE.
AH, QUESTIONS! BETOKENS A HEALTHY MIND. HEALTHY BODY TOO, I'D SAY. VERY HEALTHY. I SHALL ANSWER ALL YOUR QUESTIONS M'DEAR, FOR I AM...
BUT THE MACHINE LOOKS HUNGRY AND YOU DO SEEM SUCH A TASTY MORSEL. SOON YOU SHALL EMERGE AS THE GREATEST QUASINOID OF THEM ALL!
BY THE BOWELS OF SLOG!
SLURP!


HEHEHEHE! WITH THE AMULET OF KNOWLEDGE TO FOCUS THE POWER OF THE PSYCHLOTRON, I SHALL CREATE AN ARMY OF QUASINOIDS! THEN I'LL GET SOME RESPECT!
I SHALL STORM FEN-RA ITSELF!
I SHALL CLIMB THE STAIRWAY TO HEAVEN!
MMMMMRRRRR
BOOM
TRAPPED WITHIN THE BODY OF THE VAMPIRIC DEVICE SARGON STRUGGLES FURIOUSLY WITH HER BINDINGS...
...AS THE PSYCHLOTRON STARTS TO FEED!
TIME...FOR ONLY... ONE MENTAL BLAST... NOW!
DAMN YOU! YOU'VE HURT MY MACHINE!
QUASINOIDS! STRIP HER SKIN TO BLOODY RIBBONS!
SO...TIRED! IF ONLY...I HAD...A WEAPON...WAIT! THE AMULET!
5

DESPERATELY HOPING WHAT THE QUASINOIDS CAN TOUCH CAN ALSO TOUCH THEM, SARGON LEAPS PAST THE ETHEREAL ASSASSINS...
...AND SEIZES THE AMULET!
HEY, STOP YOU MTHRFKNBTH!
DIE, YOU SCUM-SUCKING HORDE OF SOUL DROPPINGS!
SCREEEEEE!
UNLEASHING THE FULL POWER OF HER MENTAL BLASTS INTO THE RAW MARROW OF THE PSYCHLOTRON...
DIE!
BAAROOOOO
...THE ENSUING HOLOCAUST INCINERATES BOTH MACHINE AND QUASINOIDS!
NOOOOOOOO!
MY MACHINE... MY SLAVES... MY DREAMS! GUARDS! GUARDS! GUT THE BITCH!

GIVE THEM THEIR DUE.
THESE GUARDS ARE THE BEST THERE ARE.
FIFTY OF THE TOUGHEST MERCENARIES IN THE COSMOS.
PITY THEM.
COME, FOOLS! COME TO ME AND DIE!
THEY ARE, AFTER ALL, ONLY MEN, WHILE SHE IS...
SARGON!
SARGON, MISTRESS OF WAR!


PAY HEED, MALEFIC ONE. OUT OF DEFERENCE TO MY LORD, I'LL LEAVE YOU YOUR LIFE...
...BUT IF YOU EVER COME WITHIN A PARSEC OF FEN-RA AGAIN, I'LL GRIND YOUR LIVER INTO A PATÉ.
GOT IT?
...YESSIR...
YOU HAVEN'T HEARD THE LAST OF THIS, WAR WHORE! SO SWEARS SKORBAMTIPMULA THE...THWARTED!
FORTUNATELY FOR THE GNOME, SARGON HAS ALREADY WARPED...
...BACK TO FEN-RA.
MY LORD...
EH? IS THAT YOU, SARGON? YOU LOOK DIFFERENT SOMEHOW. WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU?
YOUR AMULET, MY LORD...
WHAT ABOUT MY AMULET? IS IT ON WRONG?
I'VE BROUGHT IT BACK.
OH, THAT'S RIGHT! IT WAS STOLEN! DID YOU HAVE ANY TROUBLE?
NO, SIRE, NOT REALLY. JUST A LITTLE...
...ROUGH AND TUMBLE.
TIK
FIN.